

City of Rockville, Maryland

**Report of the 2002
Charter Review Commission**

December 31, 2002

Mayor and Council

Larry Giammo, Mayor

Robert E. Dorsey

John F. Hall, Jr.

Susan R. Hoffmann

Anne M. Robbins

City of Rockville Charter Review Commission

David L. Cahoon, Co-Chair
David Hill, Co-Chair
Doris P. Ecelbarger
Sue D. Edwards
Shelly Hardwick
Fran Hawkins
Gerald I. Holtz
Jennifer A. Kaye
Phyllis R. Marcuccio
James T. Marrinan
Robert E. Pittman
Roald Schrack

City of Rockville Staff

Paul T. Glasgow, City Attorney
Claire F. Funkhouser, City Clerk/Treasurer
Brenda F. Bean, Deputy City Clerk
Sara Taylor-Ferrell, Assistant to the City Clerk

2002 Rockville Charter Review Commission Report

Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	3
<u>Introduction</u>	4
<u>Issues</u>	8
1. Voter Referenda	9
Citizen Generated Advisory	9
Eliminate Voter Initiated Advisory Referenda	9
Adjust Signature Requirements	11
Make Referenda Binding	13
2. Election Improvements	15
Weekend Elections	15
Alternate Days and Times for Voting	17
Having Elections over Multiple Days	17
Moving Election Day to Another Time of Year	19
Coinciding City Elections with Federal/State/County/General Elections	21
3. Council Composition	24
Length of Mayor and Council Terms	24
Adjust Recall Provisions	26
Adjust Vacancy Provisions	27
Staggering Mayor and Council Terms	29
Number of Seats on the Council	31
Council Representation (by Districts vs. At-large)	34
Support for Districts in General	34
Representational Districts	38
Residential Districts	39
Mixing Districts and At-large Representation	41
4. Franchise Enlargement	42
Non-U.S. Citizen Resident Voting	42

5. Charter Maintenance	45
Mandatory Charter Review Cycle	45
6. Minority Statements	47
Residential with At-large Elections	47
Term Lengths for the Mayor and Council	49
 <u>Addenda</u>	
A. Founding Resolution	50
B. Issues Identified, Not Reviewed	50
C. Contributors	53
D. Summary Table of Public Comments	55

Executive Summary

The Mayor and Council of the City of Rockville appointed a Charter Review Commission in July, 2002, to review Charter and ordinance subjects regarding the elected portion of the city government and the election process. The Commission was charged with ten enumerated issues to review and given discretion to consider corollary issues. The Mayor and Council requested that the Commission issue a report outlining its findings and recommendations on or before January 1, 2003. The Commission gathered information from a variety of sources, considered each of the issues, and formulated recommendations which are set forth in this Report.

Issues considered by the Commission included voter referenda, improvements in the election process, council composition, franchise enlargement, and mandatory Charter review. Ultimately, the consensus of the Commission members was that the City government has generally worked smoothly and represented the needs of the City's residents. Consequently, the Commission concluded that only minimal changes in existing practices were necessary.

After due deliberations, the Commission has recommended a change in the number of signatures needed to generate a voter-initiated advisory referenda and an increase in the length of Mayor and Council terms from two to four years. With respect to the latter recommendation, the Commission concluded that if terms are lengthened, changes in the signature requirements for mounting a recall election and adjustments to the Charter provisions to fill any vacancy on the Mayor and Council should be enacted.

The Commission also addressed the following issues and recommended no change to current practice: (1) general referenda methods and their advisory status, (2) alternate days and times for voting, including weekends, multiple days, another time of year, and coinciding City elections with general elections, (3) keeping the Council size at four Council members, plus the Mayor, (4) retaining all at-large representation among the Mayor and Council seats (no districting) (5) continuing Charter review primarily on an as-needed basis, within a generous maximum review cycle, and (6) keeping the registration requirements for voting unchanged. [Note: While the Mayor and Council subsequently removed the referred issue of non-U.S. citizen resident voting from the list of issues the Commission was asked to consider, the Commission had already reached a consensus on the issue and believed that it was important to states its position on the matter in this Report given the amount of public input and the controversy that the issue generated.]

While the Commission did not uniformly reach a unanimous decision on each of the recommendations, a majority of the Commission members did support the recommendation made for each issue presented to them. To the extent that Commission members strongly opposed a recommendation, a minority statement is included in Section 6 of this report.

Given the short period of time within which the Commission had to consider the issues set forth in the Resolution, the Commission was unable to consider a number of additional issues which came to light during its term. These issues are listed in Appendix B to this Report and may warrant future consideration.

Introduction

The 2002 Charter Review Commission was authorized by resolution #11-02 of the Mayor and Council of Rockville City [see Addendum A] "to review and evaluate Articles II and III of the City Charter, and Article II of Chapter 8 ... of the Rockville City Code, which shall include, but not be limited to...." an enumerated list of ten specifically referred issues. All referred issues focused on the City's elective offices, present elective process, and resident participation in that process. The Resolution required the Commission to examine these issues and then prepare a report with recommendations concerning any changes to the Charter or Code on or before January 1, 2003.

The Commission was appointed in July, 2002 by the Mayor and Council in response to their concern over whether or not the elected portion of City government is and, in the future, will be meeting the needs of the City and its residents. The last review of issues related to the City's elective process was in 1986, when the then Mayor and Council formed an Election Task Force which undertook an analysis of many of these issues and made recommendations to the Mayor and Council. The last general review of the Charter occurred in 1983.

Issues and Related Scope

The Resolution required the Commission to consider the following issues:

- Methods by which referenda can be generated by residents
- Requiring the successful ordinance referenda bind the Mayor and Council
- Holding weekend municipal elections
- Alternative days and times for municipal voting
- The length of terms for the Mayor and Council
- Staggered terms for the Mayor and Council
- The number of members of the Mayor and Council
- Council representation by district vs. at-large election
- Voting privileges for non U.S. citizens who reside in Rockville
- Making Charter review mandatory every 10 years

To organize these issues for analysis, the Commission reduced them to the following five subject areas:

- Voters initiatives
- Improvements in the voting process
- Council composition
- Franchise enlargement
- Charter maintenance

Proceedings

The Commission initially scheduled public work sessions during which comments from a variety of individuals were received. Speakers included members of the Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections, members of the 1986 Election Task Force, numerous former Mayors and Councilmembers, a former City Manager, and the Executive Directors of both the National League of Cities and International City/County Management Association.

Next, a public forum was held and resident input was elicited. Every effort was made to notify the residents of Rockville of the public forum which was held September 19, 2002. The forum was telecast live on the City's cable channel and was re-run on several occasions. In addition, the Commission invited and received written submissions.

Finally, the Commission had a number of work sessions so that the information obtained from the various sources could be evaluated and discussed, with the ultimate goal of reaching a consensus on recommendations to be made to the Mayor and Council within the time frame allotted.

General Principles and Concerns

At the outset, the Commission identified a primary concern of eroding resident participation in municipal government. Therefore, a primary objective of the Commission became enhancing as much as possible through Charter provision and ordinance, resident participation in all aspects of City governance, including voting, testifying before the Mayor and Council and its numerous commissions, serving on commissions, and running for the City's elective offices.

The Commission also identified three broad principles which would govern its analysis of the issues presented to it. First, the City of Rockville generally has enjoyed good municipal government. Second, to the extent humanly practical, the Commission sought to focus on whether the present Mayor and Council composition and the present elective process continued to serve the needs of the City and its residents. Or, whether changes were needed so the City could move forward in the future given the changing size of its population and increasing interaction between it and other groups, both in the public and private sector. Third, the Commission was cognizant of the boundaries of our responsibility to address Charter and election ordinance aspects of the City's governing body.

An additional principle guided the Commission and was based upon a theme that was repeated throughout the information-gathering stage and during deliberations on the enumerated issues: change merely for the sake of change should be avoided. The members of the Commission agreed that any recommended changes to either the pertinent parts of the Charter or to the Rockville City Code should be based upon their conclusion that the needs of the City would be better served by that change.

Also, a theme is apparent among our recommendations on various points when we were essentially confronted with choices between quantity versus quality. We consistently preferred making recommendations promising the most quality as the best resolution on issues.

Finally, as the Commission members began the deliberative process, it became clear that many of the issues which needed to be addressed intertwined so that a recommendation on one issue would have a potential effect on another related issue. Consequently, the Commission's recommendations must be viewed in that light. Should the Mayor and Council agree to adopt one of the recommendations, but not another, the potential ramifications of those decisions should be analyzed. (For example, adopting a districting scheme for Council representation likely necessitates an increase in Council size to yield a balanced implementation.)

Time Limit Imposed by the Mayor and Council

A recurring frustration during this process was the relatively short time limit placed upon the Commission by the Mayor and Council. While members of the Commission believe that they have weighed and addressed each of the issues presented by the Resolution, a longer time limit may have given the Commission an opportunity to obtain more resident input and weigh additional issues. The amount of resident input was limited with much of the information obtained from those in the City who regularly are involved in these matters.

Moreover, the Commission was unable to address some issues that were not specifically set forth in the Resolution, but which could affect some of the Commission's recommendations. For example, compensation for the Mayor and Council members is an issue that could have an impact on a number of the issues presented to the Commission by Resolution, but could not be adequately addressed within the time limit given the Commission. Nor was time available to fully scope the nature and character of emerging governance challenges.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the Commission made a good faith effort to address all of the issues framed by the Resolution and make recommendations which the members believe are in the best interests of the City and represent not only the needs of the vocal minority of the City's residents, but also its silent majority.

Acknowledgements

Success in any such undertaking is the result of the effort and talents of many people. In this section we wish to acknowledge the contributors to this review and report. All of the people mentioned here are listed individually in Addendum C.

First, we commend the initiative of the Mayor and Council in composing and enacting this commission. From the outset, we knew they were thoughtful in the composition and mission. We are a well-balanced body in appointed representation regarding geographic origin, gender, age, residency duration and experience. Our mission statement is direct, with enumerated issues. Our existence is well defined. Also, regarding the Mayor and Council, as evidenced in our proceedings, we continue to commend the selfless public service of the individuals comprising that body. Their job is arduous, poorly compensated, and often thankless. Their quality and relatively cheerful fulfillment of their tasks deserves public recognition, often.

Next, we thank the numerous citizens that offered their insight to us. Many City residents set aside their affairs and spent time considering, composing and enunciating their concerns and opinions to us in testimony and submissions. This is great evidence, that notwithstanding various forms of declining citizen participation, there remains core vitality in our local citizenry for municipal affairs. Also, various experts and former officials graciously responded to our work session invitation and freely gave their best advice on our assorted topics.

Then various City staff quietly performed like the professionals we rely upon. This included the City Clerk and all of the staff of that office at assorted times, the City Attorney (personally), and publicity/televising and facilities staff at key junctures too. City staff support was the foundation upon which all else was built. They enabled our meetings, steered us to be more effective without intruding on the content of our mission, patiently elaborated at many points, and responded to our requirements.

Issues

As discussed in the Introduction to this Report, the Commission endeavored to obtain information from a wide variety of sources concerning the issues we were asked to address. In addition to the facts and opinions provided by individuals who came before the Commission, either in person or in writing, members of the Commission brought to the table considerable background and experience in the Rockville elective and representative processes.

With all of this information at hand, the members of the Commission sought to reach a consensus on an issue so that a recommendation on each issue could be presented to the Mayor and Council. In order to properly discuss each issue, the Commission listed the various "pros" and "cons" associated with a particular issue. These pros and cons were gleaned from the information gathered by the Commission. In some cases, they are the product of actual facts based upon historical data. In other instances, they merely state the opinions or impressions from submissions to the Commission or of members of the Commission.

Consequently, including an item as a pro or con point does not amount to a conclusive judgment by the Commission or an endorsement of its veracity. Also, some points are substantively ambivalent, so their placement as either pro or con is somewhat arbitrary. In many instances, the Commission simply set forth points made in testimony/submissions, or retained a point as one worthy of consideration in analyzing the issue it addressed. The pros and cons have not been listed in any particular order or ranking. The Commission focused on recording as many factors as practical, rather than spending extensive time attempting to rank them. So while the documentation appears to give equal weight to each point, we, at times, applied unequal significance to them, giving more attention to points we found most compelling.

This section of the Report is organized by individual issues considered by the Commission. With respect to each issue, the Commission has attempted to summarize the issue (as the Commission members understood it), set forth "pros" and "cons," make a recommendation, and finally, set forth, briefly the considerations and reasoning for reaching each recommendation, or a point that further illuminates the Commission's final recommendation.

1. Voter Referenda

All referenda currently are advisory referenda and may pose any question, other than a charter amendment, set forth in a resolution of the Mayor and Council or upon petition of ten percent (10%) of the registered voters.

State law establishes the process to enact charter amendments requiring 20% of the electorate to petition to put a proposed amendment to the charter on the ballot. The Mayor and Council may also initiate a charter amendment by resolution. These processes regarding amendments to a municipal charter, as stated in State law, **cannot** be altered by a municipality.

State law further provides that the legislative body of a municipality has the power to pass ordinances. Therefore, voters in a municipality do not have the power to initiate ordinances, but may have the power, if authorized by local law, to submit an ordinance to referendum of the voters.

Citizen Generated Advisory Referenda

Eliminate Voter Initiated Advisory Referenda

Issue Summary

While present City code enables advisory referenda, is this a necessary or valuable feature of City governance?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this larger subject to the Commission for review and recommendation. The Commission inferred this detailed issue.]

Current Practice

Voter initiated referenda, with an advisory status, are allowed under the present Code.

Considerations

In discussing referenda, we identified a general dissatisfaction with their extensive use. We observed that there has never been a successful voter initiated referenda in modern Rockville government history. One cause for this may be an inherent futility in mounting the effort to pass a strictly advisory referenda within a political structure with short election cycles. If a major change in representation circumstances is desirable, just voting out the present officials is a more direct solution if the City stays with two-year terms.

Pros (for eliminating referenda)

- Voter initiated referenda have never been used in modern Rockville history.
- Government-by-referenda is a bad condition. The exercise of frequent referenda strongly indicates a breakdown of normal and healthy local representative process. The fix for this is likely more substantial than issue-by-issue change.

- Existence and use of referenda may discourage single issue candidates in local elections. Single issue candidacy appears a growing national trend in local politics amidst the growing complexity of local governance. Since referenda enable a statement of position on single issues, their use may counter the attractiveness of essentially single issue platforms.

Cons (for eliminating referenda)

- Whether entirely effective or not, the existence of referenda as a means for the electorate to express diverging collective opinion remains a common feature of municipal governance.
- Commissioners are unwilling to recommend the abridgement of any existing means for citizens to participate in the local political process.
- The simple mounting of a referendum effort may have a desirable political influence, regardless of the eventual fruition on the ballot or outcome of voting.
- Referenda may stimulate voter participation by generating a direct vote on issues of concern to the electorate.

Options

- Retain current practice
- Eliminate voter initiated referenda.
- Consider further refinements to the referenda process.

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend retaining voter initiated advisory referenda as a feature of City ordinance and municipal politics.

Comments

In deciding to retain voter initiated referenda, we agreed that they should be "do-able, not easy" to stage. This prevents misuse of the mechanism and accompanying distortion of normal representative process.

Citizen Generated Referenda

Adjust Signature Requirements

Issue Summary

Are current signature requirements to put advisory referenda issues on the ballot a good number?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this larger issue to the commission for review and recommendation. The commission inferred this detailed issue from the larger subject.]

Current Practice

The current signature requirement to place a voter initiated advisory referendum item on the ballot is 10% of the number of registered voters.

Considerations

We observe that a large change in the number of required signatures occurred indirectly when the City changed to using the County voter registration rolls. When the City maintained its own registration rolls, there were significantly fewer registered voters (9466 for the 1985 election). When the registration change occurred before the next election, the number of registered voters increased substantially (23601 for the 1987 election). Since the referendum signature requirement is based on a percentage of the **registered** voters, this number increased substantially proportionate too.

Pros (for changing the required referenda signature number)

- The present number of required signatures is somewhat impractical to achieve, effectively making voter initiated referenda prohibitive to stage.

Cons (for changing the required referenda signature number)

- Making referenda easier to stage may trivialize its use, leading to frivolous ballot items. Such frivolous referenda not only waste public expense in voting, but also undermine the integrity of the local election process itself and confidence in local government.

Options

- Retain current practice.
- Any variety of formulation to yield a new required signature number.

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend changing the number of required signatures for placing voter initiated referenda issues on the ballot. The change should require fewer signatures than the present requirement. Our objective is to make it a practical, but not trivial number; the current number is impractical. We recommend the specific formula of 30% of the average number of ballots cast in the last three regular Mayor and Council elections (rounded up to the nearest 50 multiples).

Example

Our recommended formula as it would apply to a referendum prior to the 2003 City election is as follows:

Avg.number of ballots cast in last three City elections	5623*
Calculate 30%	<u>x 0.30</u>
Subtotal	1687
Total (rounded up to next 50s multiple)	= 1700

*5211[1997]+4690[1999]+6967[2001]

Therefore, until the 2003 election results alter the average votes cast in the last three City elections, the referendum signature requirement would be 1700 registered City voters.

Compare the current requirement of 10% of registered voters in 2001: 26,530 x 10% =2,653

Comments

The crux of our recommendation is making the requirement depend on the number of participating voters, not the number of registered voters. Incorporating participation (ballot) counts of prior election cycles (effectively averaging the turn-out) should reduce dramatic variation in the requirement due to especially heavy or light voter turn-out in a single election. Using a percentage makes the number proportional so it will adjust automatically to changes in the voting population and should not require future tweaking. We think 30% of average voters is the right proportion of voters to make referenda drives possible, but not too easy so they are casually used. The rationale is, if you can get 30% of the voters interested in the topic, it is worth reviewing by way of the ballot box.

Make Referenda Binding

Issue Summary

The result of a referenda vote should bind (obligate) the Mayor and Council to act on the result.

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Current Practice

All non-charter referenda are advisory. They do not obligate or commit the Mayor and Council to act on the result.

Pros

- If the constituency can mobilize to generate and pass referenda, the political officials should have to respond to the result.
- A binding referenda result may be a means to get a targeted change in local government policy or action without turning-over the majority of incumbent officials to get the same result through the election process. This may preserve an otherwise well-performing Council.

Cons

- We elect local government officials for their platform and their judgment. We should allow them to exercise their judgment. They may see or weigh differently merits of individual issues than the general public. This is their role as local leaders.
- Given the texture and history of Rockville City government, we cannot conceive of the circumstance that would cause such variation between constituents and officials that necessitates this binding result. Granted, this may change in the future; at such time, this issue can be reconsidered.

Options

- Retain current practice
- Provide for binding referenda result.
- Make super-majority result binding, while retaining simple majority as advisory.

Recommendations

We resolve to unanimously recommend against making non-charter referenda results binding on the Mayor and Council.

Comments

For the electorate to pass a referendum, the issue in question is already of serious concern to elected officials. Responsible leadership should hear the will of the people and respond appropriately with change or compromise. We must trust our elected officials to protect our interests. If they do not listen carefully, they will not be re-elected to office. Regardless of terms of office, referenda should not be binding to the Mayor and Council.

2. Election Improvements

Weekend Elections

Issue Summary

Would greater flexibility in polling, such as holding election on a weekend, improve voter participation in City elections?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Pros

- May improve voter participation
- More likely that voters can attend polls on a non-business day
- May ease staffing constraints for election judges with a weekend time more amenable to volunteers, especially acquiring younger judges.
- May facilitate activity of campaign volunteers by being a non-business day.

Cons

- Lack of evidence that changing day-of-week of voting causes theorized participation improvement
- Either weekend day conflicts with some religious observances and may result in lack of polling attendance among some religious observers. (Note: Most Christian religions observe a Sabbath on Sunday. Jewish, Islamic and Seventh Day Adventist faiths usually observe a Sabbath on Saturday.)
- With weekends as a common leisure travel or activity time, this may introduce scheduling conflicts that inhibit polling attendance. While business day pressures may be eased, leisure scheduling may just replace it as an obstacle to attendance. [Note: In either case, absentee balloting can address either form of scheduling conflict.]
- Poses staffing inconvenience and potential overtime cost for professional staff supporting polling
- May be more difficult and costly to arrange for polling locations on weekend day (e.g. public schools or conflict with services at religious institutions)
- Consistency of voting day with general election pattern provides predictability of scheduling polling, thereby forming regular habit to participate.
- Issues that engage the electorate and competitive races are most significant in galvanizing voter turn-out, rather than the scheduling of elections. Motivated voters will attend any reasonable election date/time or utilize absentee balloting for personal scheduling conflicts.

Options

- Retain current practice
- Change voting times or days, perhaps on a trial basis

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend against changing City election day to a weekend day. We find a lack of evidence that the theorized effects are real and the negative considerations (con points above) we identified out-weigh the positives (pros). We recommend continuing current City practice.

Comments

Public input on this subject was evenly divided.

We briefly considered whether another weekday was preferable to the current Tuesday election day. We failed to establish a reason that another day-of-week is better. Therefore, continuing current practice appears the best policy.

We note other forms of more flexible voting include mail-in and on-line voting. While we suggest that these are promising alternatives, neither appears ready for prime-time use due to unsettled technologic, legal and efficacy ramifications.

Alternate Days and Times for Voting

Having Elections over Multiple Days

Issue Summary

Would greater flexibility in polling, such as having elections over multiple days, improve voter participation in City elections?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this larger issue to the commission for review and recommendation. The commission inferred this detailed issue from the larger subject.]

Current Practice

Present City elections are held only on one day, the first Tuesday of November, in an election year.

Pros

- May improve voter participation
- More likely that voters can attend polls given more options in schedule. Or conversely stated, single day scheduling conflicts that prevent poll attendance may be eased.

Cons

- Lack of evidence that increasing the number of days for polling causes theorized participation improvement.
- Makes polling process more difficult, perhaps open to more mistakes or malfeasance. Assuring security of ballots and voting places is harder.
- The election outcome will not be as certain nor timely.
- Will increase the cost of conducting the voting.
- Poses problems among both volunteers and professionals in staffing polls.
- Arranging for use of polling places over multiple days will be more costly and harder to schedule.
- Spreading voting over multiple days may disperse public interest in the activity and have the impact of reducing public consciousness of the campaigns and election, exerting a negative impact on participation.

Options

- Retain current practice
- Change days and/or times, perhaps on a trial basis

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend against holding City elections over multiple days. We find a lack of evidence that the theorized effects are real and the negative considerations we identified out-weigh the positives. We recommend continuing current City practice of holding polling on a single day.

Comments

We note other forms of more flexible voting include mail-in and on-line voting. While we suggest that these are promising alternatives, neither appears viable due to unsettled technologic, legal and efficacy ramifications.

Alternate Days and Times for Voting

Moving Election Day to another Time of Year

Issue Summary

Would holding elections at a different time of year, improve voter participation? Is there a better calendar time to hold City elections than current practice Note: For most of City history, City Election Day was in April. This was changed in 1985 to the present practice.

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this larger issue to the commission for review and recommendation. The commission inferred this detailed issue from the larger subject.]

Current Practice

Present City elections are held on first Tuesday of November, in an election year.

Considerations

The aim of this change would be making City governance more effective or efficient through an adjustment in calendar for elections. Since the election date determines when campaigning occurs and when change in the political leadership in the City becomes effective, it determines the cycle of much other City business. We note that the only other comparable event defining the calendar cycle is the fiscal year date. Separating these two dates was a prime concern in the earlier calendar shift of Election Day. Either having an outgoing Council constraining a new administration into a newly set budget, or having budget consideration, as the first major issue for a new administration seem similarly ill timed. So election relationship to the budget cycle is a major consideration regarding predictable City business cycles. Elections also engage the public, so their calendar timing relative to other civic affairs cycles was also identified. For example, scheduling elections that conflict with major holidays, school schedules, significant dates in the schedules of overlapping government jurisdictions, and seasonal effects are other identified factors.

Pros

- May improve voter participation
- Another calendar time found better than present practice (if any), will have merits that exert a positive effect on any of the following: conduct of City business, conduct of campaigning, conduct of the election.

Cons

- Lack of evidence that changing the calendar date for election day causes improvements.
- Consistency of voting day with general election pattern provides predictability of scheduling polling, thereby forming regular habit to participate among voters.
- No clearly better calendar time was apparent.
- Early November avoids other identified conflict dates (e.g., City fiscal year date, school and holiday schedules, etc.)

- A good seasonal argument exists for November elections. This places most campaigning during the late summer and early autumn when relatively pleasant weather conditions exist. Or in extended campaign years, campaigning can occur through the spring, summer and fall. We note that perhaps the most significant campaign activity for candidates in City elections remains the door-to-door visiting of residents and potential voters. Decent weather conditions are significant to doing this and its success. We find supporting this type of campaigning is desirable, even perhaps critical for engagement of elected City officials with the local electorate.

Options

- Retain current practice
- Change Election Day to another day of the calendar
- Keep existing election day schedule

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend against changing the calendar day scheduling of City elections. Effects of alternative dates are conjectural and there is a lack of evidence that the early November date is problematic or inferior to any other date. We recommend continuing current City practice of holding elections on the first Tuesday of November in odd numbered years.

Comments

We received little general citizen input on this point.

Alternate Days and Times for Voting

Coinciding City Elections with Federal/State/County General Elections

Issue Summary

Would scheduling Rockville City elections to match the general elections of larger Federal/State/County jurisdictions be desirable? This would be the first Tuesday of November, in even numbered years.

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this larger issue to the commission for review and recommendation. The commission inferred this detailed issue from the larger subject.]

Current Practice

Presently, City elections are held in alternating years from general elections. This means City elections occur in isolation, not combined with any other jurisdiction.

Pros

- City voter participation is likely to increase, with more residents turning out to vote for the larger jurisdictions and then casting municipal votes.
- The City would likely save some costs in conducting elections by piggy-backing onto County arrangements. However, we note that the County is likely to demand some fee for this service, so potential savings are not likely to be a total cost reduction in election expenses.
- City elections would be easier to conduct as adjunct of general election voting. Conduct of election issues such as City districts, arranging polling locations, recruiting judges would all be subsumed into the County arrangements for the same.
- The technical ability to reasonably operate City ballots as appendage of general ballots (due to difficulties with County voting districts not corresponding to City boundaries) is only practical with recently adopted electronic voting machines by the County.
- All general voting locations would be consistent.

Cons

- General elections are confusing at best, as there are so many candidates and issues across multiple jurisdictions. Holding distinct City elections helps the municipal voters focus on Rockville politics and those City issues that are locally important.
- With coinciding elections necessitating concurrent campaigning, Rockville candidates will have difficulty competing for public attention with bigger campaign efforts in the larger jurisdictions. This will make City campaigns more difficult to stage. And among other multiple effects, this may discourage candidate participation within the City.
- Cost of campaigns likely would rise due to greater expenditure in getting local candidate messages out in competition with voter attention to candidates and issues in larger jurisdictions. More costly campaigns could discourage candidate participation and may distract candidate attention away from constituency interaction due to the need to raise funding.

- Many of the City residents, who work on local campaigns, are the same people that actively work on general election campaigns. The time that volunteers can devote to election work is limited and they probably must choose between campaigns to support. This is likely to negatively impact volunteer support for City campaigns.
- Non-partisan politics is a cornerstone of Rockville elections. Coinciding City and general elections will compromise poll workers and campaigners who support local candidates. Also, public confusion is likely regarding non-partisan City politics amid the partisan atmosphere of general elections.
- While City voting numbers may quantitatively increase, we doubt that this also constitutes a qualitative improvement. We suspect City voters who turn-out ostensibly for larger jurisdiction ballot items who may then casually vote for City candidates are not casting fully informed and considered local votes.
- The City likely would abrogate control of some desirable election aspects to County administration; for example, districts that make sense in the Cityscape, order/arrangement/presentation of ballots, voting equipment used, etc.
- Neighborhood identity within the City may be weakened by eliminating distinct municipal districts and polling places with concomitant community interchange that occurs during gathering to vote.

Options

- Retain current practice
- Further consideration, perhaps through the implementation of an appointed task force

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend against changing the scheduling of Rockville City elections to coincide with County/State/Federal general elections. We recommend continuing the current practice of holding City elections on a distinct date from general elections.

Comments

Rockville residents must be attentive to City issues and governance to keep it strong and viable. Anything that dilutes such attention is not good for our future. Notwithstanding that a stated principle of this commission is increasing public participation in City governance and we have heard direct compelling testimony that making this change would increase voter numbers, we nevertheless still recommend against doing so. The reason is making a distinction between simply increasing voting numbers and **improving** voter participation. The important point to improving City voter participation is increasing engaged constituents casting informed ballots. We do not find that this action accomplishes that end. And in fact, not only may this distort City politics by injecting a significant number of relatively uninformed votes, this may actually dilute City voter knowledge, even among regular City voters, because of other general campaigns concurrently competing for the inevitably finite attention of voters. We also are very sensitive about the probable negative impact of partisanship on Rockville's non-partisan governance.

Among the four election improvement issues considered by this commission, this issue has received some comments from members of the City of Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections. We pass on, with some support, the advice of the Board of Elections of Supervisors to assign a task force to extensively investigate all effects of this action if interest remains to pursue it.

3. Council Composition

Length of Mayor and Council Terms

Issue Summary

What is the optimal term length for Rockville's Mayor and Council?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Current Practice

Mayor and Council serve two-year terms.

Considerations

Two year terms for the Rockville Mayor and Council members has been in place for over fifty years, contributes to the popular responsiveness of the municipal government, and appears an element in making Rockville's city government nationally recognized. A proposal to extend terms to four years was narrowly defeated as an advisory referendum in 1997.

Changing to four-year terms would enable staggering terms and increase the desirability of term limits. Also, an easier recall mechanism should be considered with four-year terms.

We briefly considered three years terms as a compromise between two and four years. However, an odd numeric term cycle necessitates that every other election would coincide with a general election year (Federal, State and County elections). Per our earlier recommendation against coinciding the municipal election cycle, we quickly dispensed with this as a desirable option.

Altering term length will affect the functional dynamic balance between professional City staff and the Mayor and Council. Longer terms are likely to imbue more influence in the Council by lessening the reliance by continuity of City administration staff. Serving a longer term may promote more oversight and follow-through among elected officials on individual issues. Also, more experienced members of Council are likely to assert their opinion more, than rely on staff recommendation and administration.

Pros (of increasing terms to four years)

- Provides Mayor and Council more time to implement their stated goals and objectives.
- Allows Mayor and Council to focus more attention to governing and less to campaigning.
- Longer terms allow new Mayors and Council members more time to learn role.
- Requires less frequent campaigning, possibly decreasing incumbent burn-out.
- Four-year election cycle decreases government costs. Perhaps eliminating an election cycle (if not combined with staggered terms).
- Four-year term matches many other jurisdictions. Enables coordination with other longer-term electees in state and county governments.

Cons (of increasing terms to four years)

- Encourages some non-incumbents to seek public office since commitment is relatively short.
- Most citizens like the idea of "holding elected officials feet to the fire" more frequently. The principle of accountability to voters continues to be relatively strong.
- Provides a relatively frequent straightforward mechanism of removing non-performing incumbents from office.
- No direct over-riding citizen interest in changing current terms.
- Shorter terms may keep community focused and aware of City issues. Awareness may dissipate over longer-term cycle.
- Less likely to attract professional politicians, thereby sustaining citizen-legislator tradition.
- Limits partisan interest and activism, may prevent domination by individuals or closed groups.
- Longer terms may increase the funding needed by candidates in City elections. Candidates will have more time to gather a pool of funding and donors may be more inclined to contribute more per election, since a longer period of influence is at stake with longer terms.

Options

- Retain current practice of two- year terms
- Extend all terms to four years
- Extend Mayor's term to four years while keeping Council terms at two years.
- Some other term length

Recommendation

We resolve to recommend lengthening the Mayor and Council terms to four years.

Comments

This recommendation is not unanimous. A minority favors retaining two-year terms, or at least a two-year election cycle. A Minority Statement from some members of the Commission regarding the continuation of two-year term is included in Section 6 of this report.

This issue was perhaps the most difficult for the Commission members to come to consensus about, with strong arguments on both sides. In the opinion of most professional city managers and elected public officials, four-year terms are preferred because of increasing relative stability in governance and reducing stress. The crux is which term length promotes better governance. Still, little objective evidence exists that four-year terms inherently are better than two-year terms. One of the strongest points in favor of four year terms discussed by the Commission was anticipating a growth in cross-jurisdictional affairs handled by the City and the advantage of having more stable elected officials handling such issues over a longer term.

Public support for four-year terms is not readily evident. Testimony on this topic ran 3 to 2 in favor of retaining two-year terms. We suggest that if the Mayor and Council pursue this recommendation that an effort to educate the citizenry on the supposed advantages should be made.

Length of Mayor and Council Terms

Adjust Recall Provisions

Issue Summary

Are adjustments in recall provisions needed due to the Commission's recommendation to change from two-year to four-year terms for the Mayor and Council?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this general issue to the commission for review and recommendation. We inferred this detailed facet.]

Current Practice

Presently, recall of an elected official can be accomplished as a general referendum. This requires a petition signed by at least 20% of the registered voters to get a special election on the subject. A simple majority vote in this election accomplishes the recall.

Considerations

The ability of the electorate to recall an elected official is desirable. However, the present recall rules suffer the same weakness as citizen initiated advisory referenda. More signatures are required to qualify a special election on the subject, than there are participating voters in typical municipal elections.

The factors of this issue are the same as that for Citizen Generated Advisory Referenda Methods, described in section #1 Voter Initiatives, earlier in this report.

Pros & Cons

[see 1. Voter Initiatives, Citizen Generated Advisory Referenda Methods, Adjust Signature Requirements.]

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend changing the signature requirements to qualify a recall petition for continued Mayor and Council service, to match those recommended for Citizen Generated Advisory Referenda. The new formula would be 30% of the average ballots cast in the last three regular elections (rounded up to the nearest 50s multiple).

Comments

The Commission considered this issue as important, especially in light of the recommendation for longer terms.

Length of Mayor and Council Terms

Adjust Vacancy Provisions

Issue Summary

With longer recommended terms for the Mayor and Council, are adjustments in provisions for filling mid-term vacancies needed?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Current Practice

A Council vacancy within the first 12 months or a Mayoral vacancy within the first 16 months of a term is filled by a special election. A vacancy in the remainder of a term is filled by Mayor and Council appointment.

Considerations

The present rules for filling vacancies are designed for a two-year election cycle. Should our recommendation of changing to four-year, concurrent terms be enacted, adjustment to vacancy provisions for the resulting four-year election cycle is advised.

The principle for the existing two-year scheme for Council members is if the vacancy occurs in the first year of a term (first half of the term), then the electorate should choose the replacement via a special election. If the vacancy occurs in the second year (half the term), then the Council appoints a replacement. Undoubtedly the crux is how much time remains until the next regular election regarding whom chooses the replacement. The timeframe for Mayoral replacement is somewhat longer (16 months) favoring electoral selection for longer.

If vacancy provisions are not adjusted, then the present rules would leave an ambiguous two-year gap in the recommended four-year term cycle.

Pros

If recommended longer terms are enacted, then present vacancy provisions are inadequate. Closing an unspecified gap of time is necessary for complete rules to sustain the fully seated elected Mayor and Council.

Cons

None identified

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend adjusting vacancy provisions if four-year terms are enacted. We recommend applying the principle of electorate choice of a replacement (via a special election) to fill a vacancy occurring in the first half of a term. To fill vacancies occurring in the later half of a term, the Mayor and Council should appoint a replacement.

Comments

We suggest that filling vacancy rules should be based on a principle and applied by proportion of the term, rather than a specified calendar duration. The former automatically adjusts to term changes. The latter does not. Applying a principle of half terms, makes sense. This respects the choice of the citizens to elect their representatives when the remaining time in the term is substantial. However, later when this time dwindles, it empowers the Council to more quickly appoint a replacement to sustain its operations. The electorate will get its chance to support or overturn this Council selection in the quickly upcoming regular election cycle.

Present vacancy provisions contain a variation for Mayoral and Council seats. We fail to see this as a useful distinction. Applying one principle to all seats on the Council is simpler and adequate.

Staggering Mayor and Council Terms

Issue Summary

Is there a more effective arrangement of terms for the Rockville Mayor and Council? If so, what is the optimal variation of terms? Currently, all Mayor and Council terms run on the same two-year cycle; that is, all elected officials run for office in the same election. This is not the only possible arrangement. .

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Current Practice

There is no staggering of Mayor and Council terms. All members serve two-year terms running concurrently.

Considerations

With the present two-year terms of the Mayor and Council, staggering terms is not a practical option. Doing so would necessitate a City election every year. Public tolerance, costs and ostensibly creating never-ending campaigning, all argue against this arrangement.

However, if term lengths are increased, the staggering of terms becomes a relevant consideration. Or, if term lengths are varied (for example, the Mayoral term differed from Council member terms), some variety of staggering becomes necessary.

Pros (of staggering terms)

- Staggering terms can accomplish the effective measuring of public sentiment in more frequent election cycles without obligating every elected official to the rigors of running for office each time.
- Staggering terms may create more frequent opportunity for new candidates to run for office.

Cons (of staggering terms)

- Probably would be disruptive to sustained operations of the Mayor and Council. Even officials not running in a given election may delay actions until the public sentiment, as expressed through voting, is assessed for in each election. Also, uncertainty over which individual officials may be relied upon to be seated in consideration of business spanning a staggered election could delay action.
- Most staggering schemes yield a complex election dynamic.
- Elected officials not running will be drawn into the election debate and into positions about individual candidates, in effect probably causing all elected officials to campaign.

Options

- Retain current practice.
- Necessary staggering if Mayor and Council terms vary.
- Implement staggering per some mechanism. Mechanisms proposed or considered include:
 - Lowest vote recipient serves shorter term
 - Council self-selects short term member
 - One Council seat is designated for short term and elected distinctly
 - Mayoral seat is repeated in each election with two Council seats
 - Mayoral and one Council seat in one cycle, with other three Council seats in other cycle
 - Other

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend against the staggering of terms for the Mayor and Council.

Comments

At first glance, staggering terms appears to be an opportune reconciliation between extending term length to four years and retaining the familiar two-year election cycle. However, our deeper consideration concluded that staggering terms amounts to a compromise that probably accentuates the negative factors of the reconciled points. While staggering alleviates the requirement that all candidates run frequently for office, it retains the frequent election cycle and its effects, which has negative factors. Conversely, prime points for longer terms is greater stability in the Council and the ability to focus on governance, not campaigning. These are not achieved when interspersing partial elections. Therefore, we concluded that having all the Council working on the same term (either shorter or longer) was superior. Positive factors can be achieved fully.

We also note that implementation of staggered terms is problematic. We adopted the assumptions that consistent significance of election cycles and election of a majority of the Mayor and Council in each cycle were both desirable. Yet, proposed schemes for reconciling these were not satisfying, including an objectionable level of complexity to administer, for their effects in City operations, or for electorate comprehension.

Number of Seats on the Council

Issue Summary

Is there a more effective size (number of seats) for the Rockville Mayor and Council? If so, what is the optimal number?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Current Practice

There are five seats on the Mayor and Council, one Mayor and four Council members. All members are voting members whose votes count equally.

Pros (of increasing Council size)

- More seats on Council provides more numeric opportunity for people to run and serve. This may increase candidate participation.
- More seats on Council provides a smaller proportion of the population per representative seat. This may increase the relative attention of Council members to the constituency (although all at-large representation generally disperses such effect).
- Since City charter enactment, population growth without Council size adjustment has eroded the representative proportion for Council members. This has the effect of larger constituency representation in the Council. Addressing this representation proportion now may be a good time, anticipating a new spike in City population as large scale planned and approved development (King Farm, Fallsgrove and Town Center residential) are built.
- Increasing Mayor and Council size beyond five enables effective use of sub-committees. Typically, as presently constituted, our Council acts as a body of the whole or as individuals assigned to assorted initiatives. The minimum practical size for a sub-committee is three. Since this presently constitutes a majority of the Council, there remains little point of specialization of effort and recommendation made by sub-committee.
- More seats on Council may provide for more division of labor or issue specialization among Council members.
- The impact of inevitable session absenteeism by individual Council members may decrease within a larger body.
- A larger body may be harder to dominate by individual Council members. This may enhance the importance of consensus building in the body and yield more strongly representative behavior.
- Relative to district representation of Council seats, having more seats allows new configurations which may achieve better balance of districting effects.
- Relative to staggering terms or increasing term lengths, having more seats allows new arrangements which may achieve a better balance of election cycles.

Cons (of increasing Council size)

- The time required to conduct Council proceedings would increase. City Council members and staff already meet several nights a week with the meetings running late. Adding members to the Council would increase the time required to conduct meetings. Each council member feels compelled to speak on each subject to assure constituents know their opinion on issues. With each member speaking on almost every subject, increasing the number of members will correspondingly increase the overall length of meetings to accommodate additional discussion remarks. While productive discussion and debate is appropriate, increasing meeting time to allow each member to be seen as contributing is not justifiable.
- Rockville has not grown substantially over the last 25 years. While new developments, such as King Farm and Fallsgrove, will add a one time bonus of several thousand new residents, other potential growth appears limited due to a lack of undeveloped space. Therefore, City population growth over the next ten years does not warrant additional representation.
- While certain members of the Council can have areas of interest or specialization, detailed matters may be better addressed by staff or advisory commissions (e.g. the Planning Commission on land use issues). Therefore, the need to increase the Council size to promote issue coverage or issue specialization is better accomplished by other means. Plus, with the present heavy workload, it would be unwise to suggest a committee structure or specialization of responsibility as a rationale for expanding the number of the Mayor and Council. Such a structure will cause additional work and is not necessary.
- No reason exists to expect that just creating more seats will create more candidates.
- Concern is apparent over acquiring sufficient qualified candidates to run for elective office in the City. Increasing the number of seats on the Council will make any shortage more acute.
- More seats mean more people to inform and interact with in decision making. With more parties to decisions, issue wrangling probably will increase with little further enlightenment or improved performance.
- The cost of government would increase, including staff support and operational expenses.
- There is no relationship between the size of a group and the appropriate size of its representative body. Many United States cities with much larger populations than Rockville have five member governing bodies.
- Five Council members are sufficient to present all sides of an issue, and larger numbers would not, per se, increase diversity.
- The importance and authority of individual Council members would be diffused.
- More candidates, per se, do not generate more voter participation. Rather, the number of contested seats does. If we now have an average of six candidates for four seats, the percentage of contested seats is 50%. If those same six candidates are running for six seats, the percentage of contested seats is zero and the voter participation likely drops, as it did in 1993, to about 1500 voters which is about 1/3 of what one would expect for a 50% contested race. To get back to a 50% contested race level, nine candidates are needed for six seats. This number of candidates for council has occurred twice in the last 25 years and would be

very hard to achieve now. If the number of Council seats were raised , it would require 12 Council candidates to achieve a 100% contested race. This is unlikely in the current environment. There has been no ground swell of support from citizens for an increase in the number of members and it remains very difficult to attract “good” candidates now.

Options

- Retain current practice
- Increase number of seats

Recommendations

We resolve to recommend against changing the number of members on the Mayor and Council. The existing five members is the favored number.

Comments

This recommendation is not unanimous. A minority was in favor of increasing the Mayor and Council size to seven seats. However, there is no minority statement submitted.

Testimony to this Commission was about 3 to 1 against increasing the size of the Council.

We extensively discussed this issue, with moderate shifting of opinion. The discussion primarily diverged between representational reasons to increase the number and operational reasons not to do so.

One area for improvement by the Mayor and Council is the effectiveness of their deliberations in session, particularly focusing on the significance of various discussions. A reason for frequent lengthy meeting duration is a proliferation of unfocused and often repetitive commentary made by members of the Mayor and Council. A large concern in making this recommendation was that increasing the number of members of that body, would exacerbate this effect, to no advantage in the quality of governance.

Council Representation (by Districts vs. At-large)

Support for Districts in General

Issue Summary

Would some form of district representation be desirable for the offices of Mayors and Council?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Current Practice

All members of the Mayor and Council serve in an at-large capacity.

Considerations

We identified two forms of districting for consideration: representational and residential (see subsequent issue pages describing these district variants). Here, we consider the general issue of whether any form of districting is superior to the present all at-large representation.

Pros (of district representation)

- Districts would promote a sense of identity among residents within the confines of a geographical area. As noted in the Master Plan, neighborhoods within the City are diverse. Presently, some residents feel there are sections of the City that are under represented because they either have no voice on the Council or their residents do not have the time or means to bring their issues to the Council. Election districts would assure geographically based representation on the Council for all residents of the City.
- Districts could enable candidacy for elective office fostered by the neighborhood associations located within an election district. With the decline of the non-partisan parties, neighborhood associations could be the proving ground for those residents who are thinking of eventually running for public office.
- Some areas of the City may dominate elections and control the composition of the Council in at-large representation. Districting assures dispersion of such control.
- Districts would enable individuals with more limited resources to run for office. A common thread in testimony is that finding enough individuals to run for office is difficult. In addition, prior candidates have expressed the difficulties associated with running for City-wide office. With the increase in the City's population (with King Farm and Fallsgrove build-out) these difficulties will only be compounded. Candidates will either have to have financial resources to mount an effective City-wide campaign or time and personal resources to visit individual residents. Election districts comprise a smaller area for a candidate to cover. Campaigns would be less expensive and less physically demanding. As a result more candidates are likely to run.

- If districts make campaigning easier, running for office every two years would not be as onerous for incumbent Council members. This may alleviate a rationale argued as a condition for increasing term lengths.
- Districting would obligate a Council member to an area of the City and its concerns, thereby potentially limiting necessary attention devoted to other parts. This may ease the workload of individual Council members.

Cons (of district representation)

- Districting promotes parochial behavior in candidates and representatives. A candidate is encouraged to promote his/her area of the city and disregard other areas. This is divisive during campaigning and Council deliberations. At-large representation ensures that all candidates must attend to the needs of all areas of Rockville. They can expect to be penalized by the voters if they show a clear preference or ignore one area in the City.
- If a Council member is obligated to only one district, their attention to the overall welfare of the total community may decrease correspondingly. The district Council member may contribute less to the work of the council. City-wide issues may suffer from piecemeal focus and attention.
- District representation can distort equity of care in governance. While, at-large representation assures some level of consistent attention and obligation for all parts of the City.
- District representation can devolve into advocacy of members representing specific areas. The attention an area then receives may depend on the savvy of their representative on the Mayor and Council.
- A core assumption of district voting is having a neighbor represent you are better than someone living across town. With the limited number of candidates available, voters will have to lower their expectations in many cases when forced to choose from the even more limited selection that district voting will entail.
- May limit the candidate pool significantly in an area. Historically, the pool of prospective candidates in the city has been small. For the last eight elections there have not been full slates of candidates. In fact, on average there have been six council candidates for four seats. If present trends continue, any subdivision of the city into separate election districts would cause running without opposition in some districts.
- May require politically motivated special attention given to specific area interests within the City. Council members may expect disproportionate staff time for their particular aspects. Presently, staff can give same information and instructions to all Council members without stressing particular district needs. How would the independence of the City Manager and staff in planning and allocating City resources be affected by the existence of Council members with a clear agenda to boost consideration of their district? Council members, in the heat of a race, are apt to make promises. Presumably, Council members would have conflict with staff when unfavorable decisions affected a specific district. District representation has at its core a concept of preference at odds with the current separation of responsibilities that our Council/Manager form of government is based on.

- At-large representation empowers citizens to communicate with any Council member for assistance, to express concerns or make comments or proposals.
- The idea that only a resident of an area can understand its needs might have some validity when large geographical areas with different degrees of urbanization and age distribution are involved. However, Rockville is small in physical size (12 sq. miles) and relative population (~48,000). The city facilities are scattered and easy to reach from any location. The City has 60 recognized neighborhoods and 54 citizen associations. None of them represents more than a few percent of the City population and there are no large areas that are sufficiently diverse that could justify separate representation. Because city services are apportioned according to need by a professional staff that is independent of political control, there is no disproportionate distribution of city resources. In testimony to this commission, the public indicated no need or great desire for separate representation.
- If no one runs from a district, how will that seat be filled? And, if only one candidate runs for that district, it would be an undesirable uncontested election.
- Even if the prospect of an easier race persuaded people to run in every district, each district would have so few voters that it would be easy for a small group with an extremist agenda to control an election in a district that had a low turnout.
- By law districts must be designated to have equal population. The number of votes required to win in one district may vary widely from one district to another. For instance, in the recent primary, in County Councilmanic districts 1 and 2 votes for Governor differed by a factor of two. Because District 1 has an older age distribution, and thus more voting age population, the ballots of its voters are worth about half as much (0.58) in any election as the ballots in District 2. Because the size of districts is determined by total population, paradoxically, those areas with better voting records are penalized. Looking at the 10 voting districts of Rockville one finds that there are districts that have over three times as many voters for the same number of residents as other districts. It is not possible to create 3 councilmanic districts in Rockville without having at least a 0.70 devaluation of ballots in at least one of the districts.
- When races are for a single seat (as they are in district representation) the voter has only one choice and must decide who among the candidates is their one and only choice. In an at-large race with more candidates than seats to be filled, voters can extend their choices beyond their first choice to other candidates until they have made choices to fill all the seats. This characteristic of at-large races has advantages both for the voters and candidates. For the voter, the option of four choices allows for an exercise in judgment of relative merit without the necessity of eliminating candidates of lesser merit. For the candidate, it gives some hope of election even in a field of candidates where there are clear front runners.
- Past experience shows that competitive elections cause better voter turn-out. If a lack of candidates led to no opposition in some districts, voter participation is sure to drop. In the 1993 race where there was no opposition, less than a third of the normal number of voters came to the polls.
- The at-large system places all candidates in competition. The voter is then free to choose from among the candidates whom s/he feels will make the best team to run the City. The experience of the past 25 years has shown that, on average, the geographic distribution of

candidates as well as those successfully elected, matches well the distribution of voters in the City. While not all elected officials have been of equal quality, they represented the City's voters. The setting up of districts restricts the voter's choice based on the location of the voter and the candidate.

Options

- Retain current practice at-large representation.
- Enact representation districts for Council seats (candidate resides in district and only voted for within district)
- Enact residential districts for Council seats (candidate resides in district but is voted for throughout City)
- Mix representation, some at-large, some by district

Recommendations

We resolve to recommend against any districting system for Mayor and Council representation. We prefer retention of all at-large representation.

Comments

This recommendation is not a unanimous opinion of the Commission. A minority favors a residential districting system. A Minority Statement is included in Section 6.

Operational concerns of districting are a large concern for the majority opinion. How do we assure competitive elections among the districts (with accompanying benefits of robust public affairs consideration and vote participation), especially with a declining trend in candidates running for office? Also, districting could become an obstacle to electing the best candidates throughout our City. In general, geographic grouping of candidates has not been pronounced in Council history. And combined with at-large representation, minor grouping that has occurred does not appear problematic in City governance. With five councilmembers and assuming the mayor and at least one council member run at-large, that would leave three councilmembers to run from districts. That would mean having three districts consisting of many neighborhoods (and approximately 20,000 individuals) diluting the premise of more local representation.

We note that testimony on this subject ran more than 3 to 1 in favor of retaining all at-large districting. And those testifying or submitting in favor of districting, did so using conceptual arguments. No one testified that they felt under-represented because of a lack of district representation nor did anyone provide factual or anecdotal evidence of this. Therefore, we failed to find a real problem that district representation addresses in City governance.

Council Representation (by Districts vs. At-large)

Representational Districts

Issue Summary

Are representational districts a superior scheme?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this general issue to the commission for review and recommendation. We inferred this detailed option.]

Current Practice

All members of the Mayor and Council serve in an at-large capacity.

Considerations

Representational districting occurs when candidates are required to reside in a district and voters only vote for candidates residing in the same district. This is the common application of districts (wards).

The general pro and con merits of representation districts are the same as those discussed under *Support for Districts in General* (above). The pro and con points noted below are distinctive to this variety of district definition. In general, these points are in contrast to the properties of residential districting (below).

Pros

- Direct and obvious association of voters/residents and representative legislators.
- Assures distribution of candidates and electoral control.

Cons

- Can lead to the most parochial of representative motivation.
- Restricts the choices of voters in all areas of the City to the candidates available in the separate districts.
- Care required to delineate district boundaries since the equal protection clause etc. of the U.S. Constitution would require each district to be the same size and periodically adjusted.

Recommendations

No recommendation is offered on this subject since this commission generally found at-large representation to be superior and therefore recommended against the use of any districting system (see above, *under Support for Districts in General*)

Comments

None

Council Representation (by Districts vs. At-large)

Residential Districts

Issue Summary

Are residential districts a superior scheme?

[The Mayor and Council referred this general issue to the commission for review and recommendation. We inferred this detailed option.]

Current Practice

All members of the Mayor and Council serve in an at-large capacity.

Considerations

Residential districting occurs when candidates are required to reside in a district but are elected through at-large voting.

The general pro merits of residential districts are the same as those discussed under *Support for Districts in General* (above). Few of the con points are relevant to resident districts. In general, these points are in contrast to the properties of representational districting (above).

Pros

- Retains potential benefits of distributing candidates while retaining a single, unified electorate.
- Districts might promote a sense of identity among residents within the confines of a geographical area. As noted in the Master Plan, neighborhoods within the City are diverse. Presently, some residents feel there are sections of the City that are under represented because they either have no voice on the Council or their residents do not have the time or means to bring their issues to the Council. Election districts would assure geographically based representation on the Council for all resident of the City.
- District could enable candidacy for elective office fostered by the neighborhood associations located within an election district. With the decline of non-partisan parties, neighborhood associations could be the proving grounds for those residents who are thinking of eventually running for public office.
- Some areas of the City may dominate elections and control the composition of the Council in at-large representation. Districting assures dispersion of such control.

Cons

- More complex and uncommon definition. May cause general public confusion.
- Potential problems may arise if there is only one or no candidate wishing to run from a district.

Recommendations

No recommendation is offered on this subject since this commission generally found at-large representation to be superior and therefore recommended against the use of any districting system (see above, *under Support for Districts in General*).

Comments

None of the cons (of represent districts) are relevant to consideration of residential at large election of district representatives of the district systems discussed (representational, residential and mixed), residential districting was favored by a minority of the Commission. A Minority Statement from those members of the group is included in Section 6 of this report.

Council Representation (by Districts vs. At-large)

Mixing District and At-large Representation

Issue Summary

Is there a beneficial mix of representation where some seats of Council would be held by district and others at-large?

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this general issue to the commission for review and recommendation. We inferred this detailed option.]

Current Practice

All members of the Mayor and Council serve in an at-large capacity.

Considerations

Another variation of districting is a mixing district and at-large seats. Some seats would be elected by at-large voting while others would be elected only by district (either representational or residential). A quick consensus formed that to formulate an effective mixed representational scheme, the number of seats on the Council needed to be increased to enable a numeric balance among at-large and district representational seats.

Pros

- This is a compromise scheme that attempts to balance the merits of both district and at-large representation by having both present within the elective body.
- Mixing at-large and district representation is used for the County Council and School Board to assure that no one district can be unduly pressured by the other districts. The mix is made so that the resident of any district votes for a sufficient number of candidates that can protect that district's interest.

Cons

- Most complex districting scheme of those considered. Can be difficult or confusing to administer.
- Mixing at-large and district representation reduces the number of district seats available so that fewer districts must be laid out to cover the area. This reduces the probability that a district will be small enough to encapsulate problems that might be peculiar to a particular area of the City.

Recommendations

No recommendation is offered on this subject since this commission generally found at-large representation to be superior and therefore recommended against the use of any districting scheme (see above, *under Support for Districts in General*).

Comments

None

4. Franchise Enlargement

Non-U.S. Citizen Resident Voting

Issue Summary

Allowing non-U.S. citizen residents to vote in City elections.

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation. Subsequently, per consensus of the Mayor and Council on October 14, 2002, this issue was withdrawn as a mandated referral item from the Charter Commission resolution. Noting that most of the commission effort gathering input, deliberating on this subject and producing a draft recommendation on this issue was completed prior to the subsequent Mayor and Council action, the commission moved at its October 24th meeting to continue to make a recommendation on this issue based on prior work.]

Note: While this issue was referred to us as "voting privileges for resident alien citizens of Rockville", we prefer the terminology appearing above. The referral terminology is neither technically correct (pertaining to "citizens") nor popularly well understood (pertaining to "alien").

Current Practice

You must be a United States citizen to register for and vote in City elections.

Pros

- This would increase voter franchise in the City.
- May engage more residents in City government affairs, especially among growing minority populations where a higher prevalence of non-U.S. citizen status observably exists.
- May balance taxation support of the local government with voting participation in the same.
- While, U.S. citizenship is a federal government status, allowing (most) City residents to vote may constitute exercise of local government prerogative to better represent the local community in elections.
- Effectiveness of the Federal INS in processing naturalization applications seems more in doubt and may be a growing obstacle in the attainment of citizenship. Extending municipal voting rights to pending naturalization applicants may be a local accommodation that engages willing prospective citizens on the local level without bureaucratic delay.
- U.S. Citizenship qualification for voting originated after World War I, during a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment. Continuing this legacy may be inappropriate given contemporary official protections against bias. Further, demographic realities and social attitudes suggest that portending a more encompassing position for all the residents of our City is a more progressive position.

Cons

- How do we assure that participating voters comprehend the process in which they are participating and are knowledgeable of campaign issues? While citizenship qualifications may be an imperfect correlation to these, it remains the accepted standard.
- Administrative hurdles appear difficult. For example, this may force the City to maintain a separate voter registration from current County rolls. Or, due to a diversity of legal resident alien permits, tricky implementation issues may arise between these statuses. Also, the distinction between legal and illegal immigrant status is a relevant registration question and therefore would become an administrative distinction for City election officials, if enacted.
- If citizenship criteria is abandoned for voting, further criteria is unclear. Some variety of proof of residency and commitment to the City and/or Constitution seems warranted. The concept here is that we want committed local residents voting, not simply those present come election day. However, any monetary based proof of such residency commitment (such as proof of tax, mortgage or rent payment) resembles an indirect poll tax—a voting qualification widely discredited, legally and socially.
- We predict that a referendum on this issue would be defeated soundly.
- In nearby jurisdictions where this was implemented, the significance of it appears small and actual participation among the targeted group appears to be diminishing over time.
- Does removal of voting privilege accompanying citizenship remove an incentive to become naturalized? If so, might this have a fracturing effect in the community by reducing assimilation of immigrants into a cohesive community?
- Notwithstanding efficacy doubts, the Federal INS is the appropriate agency for citizenship issues. Local government should defer to this process and status.
- Reverses firmly established standard of citizenship as voting qualification. Cited historic precedent of earlier non-U.S. citizen voting is not entirely compelling. There are many abandoned voting practices in American history, including public balloting (i.e. lack of secret balloting), distribution of spirits to voters, landholding qualifications, racial and gender barriers, assorted poll taxes, and various manipulative schemes by local political machines. All have been discredited during progress to the modern election standards. Earlier lack of citizenship voting requirements may be more influenced by periods and regions where immigrants were a significant portion, if not majority, of the population given the rate of immigration relative to the proportions of native births and naturalization. We note that voting requirements have remained relatively stable in the later part of the 20th century through today. The last significant general change was federalizing the voting age of 18 in 1972 and ongoing disputes largely have been about districting issues, not defining the franchise.

Options

- Retain current practice.
- Look for other ways to engage target group, without changing voting rules.

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend against implementing change to voter qualifications in City elections to include registering non-U.S. citizen residents and opening voting to them in municipal elections.

Further recommendation

We see much merit in striving to improve the civic participation of the growing number of non-citizen residents in the City, which also includes a high proportion of racial, ethnic and cultural minorities. Yet, we do not think the best approach is changing our voter rules to vary from county, state and national standards, and the preponderance of other municipalities in the country. We see merit in retaining citizenship, with its presumed comprehension of and commitment to democratic civic principles and a presumed facility with the English language as a medium to understand election issues, as a qualification for voting. Rather, we recommend that the City reinforce its support for citizenship programs. We suggest that supporting more of our residents in becoming citizens, instead of changing the well-established rules of voting participation, is better policy.

In making this recommendation, we fully are aware that some non-citizen residents, for personal reasons, never will pursue citizenship qualification and are therefore excluded from municipal voting. We note that this is a personal choice and that no right to vote exists among fundamental Constitutional or human rights. Also, non-U.S. citizen residents are excluded from very few forms of civic participation or benefiting from local government activities that directly relate to their lack of citizenship and therefore non-voting status. For example, within the City government, we do not require proof of citizenship to request municipal services, testify at hearings, participate in activities or programs, qualify for benefits, receive general services, serve on most commissions, or participate in local associations. So, while non-U.S. citizen residents are effectively disenfranchised from voting, this does not mean they necessarily are disconnected from City governance or community affairs. We think the benefits of voting remain in balance with the rights and obligations of citizenship. We, therefore, encourage the City to reach out to non-citizen residents for them to participate on Boards and Commissions and all other City activities.

Comments

We received more public input on this issue than any other in this review. That input is more polarized and most strongly expressed, on both sides, than elsewhere. The majority of testimony and submissions were in opposition.

5. Charter Maintenance

Mandatory Charter Review Cycle

Issue Summary

Should there be a mandatory review cycle for the Charter? If so, what should be the frequency of mandated review and by what method? Currently, the City has no Charter Review requirements, other than legal obligation to observe its conditions or enact *ad hoc* modifications.

[The Mayor and Council explicitly referred this issue to the commission for review and recommendation.]

Current Practice

No mandatory Charter Review cycle exists. Charter Review is initiated and accomplished on an ad hoc basis. Since the City Charter was adopted in 1954, three general reviews have been undertaken in 1971, 1983 and now 2002. Also, election aspects of the Charter were reviewed by an Election Task Force in 1986.

Considerations

Our discussion primarily focused between advantages (maintenance, regularity and participation) of a regular charter review cycle versus recognizing the need to respond to more immediate issues and perceiving that a fixed review cycle may interfere with such responsiveness or that a regular cycle may lead to more change than really necessary.

Pros

- Would provide discipline to Charter maintenance by requiring a regular cycle of review. Review does not necessitate change.
- A regular review cycle of adequate frequency would lessen the work of any one review cycle. That is, ongoing maintenance would likely decrease any backlog of issues and considerations for a given review cycle.
- Any inclination to make anticipatory Charter Review changes might be lessened by the certainty of a future review at a specified time.
- Presumably, required scheduled review of the Charter will increase the scrutiny of this document. Such increase in scrutiny and opportunity for review should raise public awareness of City operations and increase citizen input opportunity.

Cons

- Scheduled review of the Charter may lead to an inclination for change to it. Unless a policy of restraint is adopted, each review cycle is bound to recommend some change as a yield to their consideration. Frequent Charter change is considered undesirable since it undermines the stability of the core rules of City governance.
- Artificial scheduling of Charter review may inhibit critical *ad hoc* review. Or critical desirable changes may get postponed until a scheduled cycle, instead of servicing an immediate need.

- Performing Charter review on an as-needed basis may be more appropriate. That is, only consider changing the core operative rules of the City when a need for change, or at least its consideration, is apparent.

Options

- Retain current practice, changing on an as needed basis. .
- Implement mandatory review cycle (determine optimal frequency)
- Require Mayor and Council to discuss the need for charter review at least on a set time cycle.

Recommendations

We resolve unanimously to recommend the practice of assuring that all of the City Charter should be reviewed over a period not to exceed twenty years and not precluding periodic reviews of specific sections to respond to necessary issues.

Comments

Our recommendation attempts to balance aspects expressed in the considerations. We generally perceived that only modifying the Charter when need to do so is apparent as a superior practice. Still we recognize that political obstacles to doing so may arise and imposing some cycle may encourage ongoing maintenance or create positive impetus to enact points that may otherwise languish. Therefore, we recommend a longer review cycle that is intended to be a greatest maximum duration in which some ongoing review is reasonable. Within this maximum cycle, specific review, as needed, is encouraged.

We observe that the time frame for this Charter Review was too short. We could not perform a comprehensive job of considering all issues identified in this one cycle. We recognize that the cause for this lies mostly in the present two year term length of the Mayor and Council and a desire to conclude review in time to enact any changes within this term. This may be a good example of more in depth issue handling that can arise from a longer elective term cycle in the City government.

We also suggest that seeking independent expert consultation to review many Charter issues is desirable. Review of many Charter sections is best conducted by professional consultants or staff. Or more active advisement to citizen commissioners by independent experts may yield a more thorough review.

Lastly, regular and robust citizen input regarding issues of elected government structure, as determined in the Charter, is highly desirable. This government, after all, represents the people of this City and their voice in determining its composition and operations is critical to this representational character.

6. Minority Statements

Residential Districts with At-Large Elections

Submitted by David Cahoon and Gerry Holtz

While the Commission achieved a consensus in support of at-large elections of all council members, we remain convinced that at-large elections with district residence requirements for some or all of the council members would better serve the City, in general, and the residents of the City, in particular. Such an electoral system presents circumstance for enhancing the governing body's capacity to implement the Goals and Plans referenced in the resolution establishing the Commission and, more important, the goals of the City's master Plan. Consequently, reexamination of this issue should be undertaken by the Mayor and Council.

Resident districts can assure geographically-based representation on the Council for all residents of the City and stimulate neighborhood association's activity as a proving ground for candidates. Such representation provides an opportunity for direct dialogue on the Council with respect to any adverse neighborhood impact resulting from implementation of various plans relating to traffic and transportation and the like which are undertaken by the City or regional governmental agencies.

For example, when the Master Plan addresses the need for a multi-modal transportation system, a dichotomy of objectives emerges requiring government resolution. As noted in the Plan, Rockville is a designated "Corridor City" in the regional plans and is and has been a government center. The solving of inadequacies in the present transportation system and the increasing traffic congestion must be coordinated with WMATA, County and State agencies and, at the same time, must serve and not adversely impact neighborhoods. Solutions to this complex problem may and, in many cases, do have differing impacts on the City's neighborhoods.

In addition, the Master Plan reflects a substantial expansion in the City's geographic area in the past 20 years and now encompasses an area extending north to south from Shady Grove Road to Montrose Road and east to west from Southlawn/Redgate to Rockshire and Fallsmead. At the same time, it reaffirms the City's commitment to "integrity of neighborhoods, a variety of housing options.... and an multi-modal transportation system." It notes that Rockville is becoming more ethnically diversified, that the population is aging and that more elderly are choosing to remain in the City. More important, it further notes that "although residents identify the City of Rockville as their home, their most important identification is often with their individual neighborhoods."

As noted in the Master Plan, "every neighborhood experiences changes over time." Changes occur in the composition of the housing stock and in the age, income, race, and ethnicity of neighborhood residents. It is important to anticipate and respond to any potential problems that will occur as change occurs." A half-century of distinct growth patterns presents a diversity of community needs and requirements justifying a citywide representative voice on the City Council, which can be insured with resident districts. At the same time, at-large election of the candidates running for office to the Mayor and Council will insure that elective officials have the interests of the entire City in mind as they implement the Master Plan.

In sum, the Master Plan presents purpose, principles, and objectives consonant with the Strategic Plan and identifies as a challenge for Rockville to "maintain its desired small town community spirit and unique quality within the larger metropolitan Washington area." It notes the need to foster greater cooperation/coordination between the City and the State, the County Board of Education, and the County's planning and construction efforts. In particular, there are chapters which focus on residential neighborhood planning areas and transportation. The distinctive identity of the various neighborhoods is noted, as is the importance of empowering each neighborhood to enhance and maintain its own quality of life.

The Mayor and Council are urged to undertake a specific and comprehensive review of all of the elements of the Master Plan with the purpose of securing a full and effective implementation of them. In that regard, we submit that resident districts with at-large elections would best serve the future needs of the City and its residents as envisioned by the Master Plan.

Minority Statement on Term Lengths

Submitted by David Hill, Sue Edwards, and Phylis Marcuccio

A minority of this Commission favor retaining two years terms over the majority recommendation of extending Mayor and Council terms to four years. The compelling points in this minority opinion are:

- Rockville's reputation for good municipal government and especially its citizen responsiveness, arises partly from a history of two-year election cycles. As a core aspect of the representative government structure, we believe there is direct cause and effect between this responsiveness and the shorter term length. Citizens are never more than a year away from having the major issues of the city and the positions of the candidates brought to their attention. This is desirable and should be retained.
- An effect of longer terms is a departure from the City tradition of citizen legislators. Longer terms requiring more engagement are likely to emphasize more legislative and administrative aspects of Mayor and Council service to the detriment of representative aspects. This will foster candidates to run for office who are pseudo-professional politicians and discourage service of the general population as candidates for City elective office. Further, candidates who may be willing to give the City two years of their time may feel that four years is too much and simply will not seek office.
- The City population clearly prefers to hold their elective representatives more accountable and shorter terms realize this desire. Most advocates for longer terms are already engaged in City business. Most plain citizens generally do not support it. Nor do sufficient direct citizen-based reasons to pursue this exist. Also, the Commission failed to make any finding that the electorate is calling for this change. Therefore, we infer that in addition to the vocal opposition, the silent majority of city residents are also disinclined to support this change.
- Changing to fewer elections for longer terms is going to change the nature and character of elections for the worse. We anticipate that candidates and parties wishing to influence City politics will commit more money to elections, since that money buys more influence. This will raise the threshold of financing for running for City office. It will also favor monied interests over general resident interests. Further, this influence is likely to discourage general residents running for office, leaving candidates with a specific agenda to push or those having garnered sufficient external resources or can independently finance such more expensive campaigns.
- Four-year terms will change the dynamics of balance between the Mayor and Council and the City Manager. The longer term increases the sense of security for members of the Mayor and Council and thereby, may influence their participation in the day-to-day running of the City.
- Good Council members are re-elected if they seek office. This fact is proven over and over by examining the election records. For others, change is better made after two poor years than four years.
- Two years is long enough to see that a Mayor and Council initiative is put into motion.

Addenda

A. Founding Resolution

Resolution No. 11-02

RESOLUTION:

To establish a Charter Review Commission to review and make recommendations to the Mayor and Council on the election process contained in the Charter and Election Ordinance of the City of Rockville.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council have approved five (5) goals and twenty-two (22) action items for 2002-2003; and

WHEREAS, one of the goals set by the Mayor and Council is the enhancement of Rockville's Community Identity and pride; and

WHEREAS, one of the action items identified by the Mayor and Council to reach that goal is a review of the Charter provisions and Election Ordinance provisions related to the election process; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council desire to establish a Charter Review Commission for the purpose of reviewing Article II, "The Mayor and Council," and Article III, "Registration, Nominations and Elections," of the City Charter and Article II of the Elections Ordinance, "Types of Elections", and any additional provisions of the City Charter and Rockville City Code related to these topics that the Commission believes are appropriate, and to prepare a report with the Commission's recommendations to the Mayor and Council.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF ROCKVILLE MARYLAND, as follows:

1. That a Charter Review Commission is hereby established as follows:
 - a. The Charter Review Commission will be comprised of no more than eleven members, all of whom will be registered voters who reside in the City.
 - b. The Chair of the Supervisors of Elections will serve as an ex officio representative to the Charter Review Commission.
2. That the Charter Review Commission has the following duties and responsibilities:
 - a. To review and evaluate Articles II and III of the City Charter, and Article II of Chapter 8, the "Elections Ordinance" of the Rockville City Code, which shall include, but not be limited to, the methods by which referenda can be generated by citizens; requiring that referenda bind the Mayor and Council; weekend elections; alternative days and times for voting; length of terms for the Mayor and Council; staggered terms for the Mayor and Council; voting privileges for resident alien citizens of Rockville,

the number of members of the Mayor and Council; councilmanic districts vs. at-large elections; and mandatory charter review every ten (10) years.

- b. To solicit citizen input regarding these issues by public forums or other process.
- c. To prepare a final report to the Mayor and Council no later than January 1, 2003, setting forth the findings, recommendations, and any proposals for amendments to the Charter and the Election Ordinance of the City of Rockville.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Mayor and Council at its meeting July 8, 2002.

[signed]
Claire Funkhouser, City Clerk

B. Issues Identified, Not Reviewed

ELECTION/CAMPAIGN ISSUES

Use of City resources regarding campaigning

Equity of candidate exposure in campaigning

Campaign funding limits or campaign caps

Time limits on campaigns

Strengthen campaign finance reporting

- Review forms for effectiveness
- Require near-final disclosure prior to election

Increase candidates in City elections

- Reduce barriers (e.g. eliminate resident treasurer rule)
- Review number of nominating petition signatures required

Increase voter turn-out

Slates of candidates in City elections

Addition of "sexual orientation" to protections in Fair Campaign Practices

Code

Promote on-line voting

STRUCTURE OF ELECTIVE GOVERNMENT ISSUES

Form of government

- Review role and operations of Mayor and Council
- Increase of mayoral power/influence (relative to Council or Manager)
 - Make it a full-time position
 - Term variation from Council
 - Revise election of Mayor, direct vs. from among Council members

Determine implications and restrictions of non-partisan requirements

Mayor and Council compensation

Term limits

MISCELLANEOUS

Strengthen and clarify financial disclosure reporting

- Review forms for effectiveness
- Set explicit rules for income types
- Provide guidelines or examples for reporting

Continuing education requirements for officials in City government

Review tax policy, be explicit about City tax authority

C. Contributors

Mayor and Council

Larry Giammo, Mayor
Robert Dorsey, Councilmember
John Hall, Jr., Councilmember
Susan Hoffmann, Councilmember
Anne Robbins, Councilmember

Charter Review Commissioners:

David Cahoon (Woodley Gardens)
co-Chair, *former City Atty.,
County official, and Judge*
Doris Ecelbarger (Montrose) ex
officio, Chair, Board. of
Supervisors of Elections
Sue Edwards (Rockshire)
Shelly Hardwick (Courthouse
Walk/West Rockville)
Fran Hawkins (Lincoln Park), Pres.,
Lincoln Park Civic Association
David Hill (Hungerford) co-Chair;
Pres. Hungerford Civic
Association; Chair, City of
Rockville Board of Appeals
Gerry Holtz (King Farm), Pres.,
King Farm Civic Association
Jennifer Kaye (West Rockville),
Dir., Peerless Rockville
Phyllis Marcuccio (East Rockville),
Pres., East Rockville Citizens
Association
Jim Marrinan (Fallsmead), *former
City Councilmember*
Robert Pittman (Twinbrook), Pres.,
Twinbrook Citizens Association
Roald Schrack (New Mark
Commons), Officer, Alliance of
Rockville Citizens (ARC)

Staff Support:

Paul Glasgow, City Attorney
Claire Funkhouser, City Clerk
Brenda Bean, Deputy City Clerk
Sara Taylor Ferrell, Assistant to the
City Clerk

Invited Guests/Experts:

Claire Funkhouser, City Clerk
Jim Marrinan, *former
Councilmember*
Roald Schrack, *City Elections
Specialist, Alliance of Rockville
Citizens*
Members of the Board of
Supervisors of Elections
Doris Ecelbarger, Chair
David Celeste
Sidney Gottlieb
Rose Krasnow, *former Mayor*
Alexander Greene, *former Mayor*
Walter Scheiber, *former City
Manager*
Members of 1986 Charter Task
Force
Steve Edwards
Charlie Carroccio
Ruth Loevinger
Ken Reichard
Steven Van Grack, *former Mayor*
James Coyle, *former Mayor*
Glennon Harrison, *former Council
member*
Bob Wright, *former Councilmember*
William Hansell, Exec. Director,
International City/County
Management Assoc.
Don Borut, Exec. Director, National
League of Cities

Speakers at Public Forum, September 19, 2002

George Northway, *former Council member*
Rose Krasnow, *former Mayor*
Lih Young *former Mayor and Council candidate*
Harry Thomas *former Council candidate*
Carl Henn *former Council candidate*
Jim Coyle *former Mayor*
Helen Hillstrom
Tom Curtis, *former Council candidate*
Irwin Cohen
Joseph Bradley
Henry Quintero, for Latino Civil Rights Center
Nadeem Tahir, for Rose Hills Falls HOA
Birgitta Mullican Chair, Planning Commission
Ted Reuther, for College Gardens CA
Mike Menekar Pres., Rockshire HOA
Stan Klein, for Alliance of Rockville Citizens [Pres.]

Sidney Gottlieb, Member, Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections
David Celeste, Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections
Charles Haughey, *former Council candidate, candidate for Col School Board*
David Seldin, for King Farm CA
Andrew Martin
Lillian Cruz, for Hispanic Democratic Club
Anna Sol Gutierrez, *candidate for State Delegate*
Karen Adamson
Martin Heilman
Paul Newman, Citizen Rep., Greater Rockville Partnership
Ruth Hanessian
Kavita Dawson
Karen Morgan
David Brenner
Tom Sheehan
William Flury
Dorothy Wright
Eric Dansker
Art Salwin